

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LEARNING.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/services/advanced-entry/>
- <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/systems/myskills/>
- Student Learning Service (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/academic-skills/>)
- Wellbeing resources and training (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/wellbeing/wellbeing-resources-training/>)
- Resilience Short Course (micro-credential resilience course open to all students, <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/course/PS1015/2025>)

## SUPPORT

The Student Advice & Support Office offers impartial advice and support on a range of issues, including personal circumstances, money matters, disabilities and specific learning differences, mental health and wellbeing, and more. Find out more here: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/services/student-advice-support-office/> or email [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk)

For mental health support, please text or call: [Student Helpline phone number \(UK\) 0808 196 2707](tel:08081962707)

University of Aberdeen

# SKILLS FOR DEVELOPMENT SELF-DIRECTED STUDY



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Aberdeen

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This pamphlet was created with your student experience in mind.

Many students who've already made the transition from college to university have said that one of the biggest challenges they faced was getting to grips with self-directed study. Based on their feedback, this guide is designed to help you build confidence and develop the skills needed to navigate self-directed learning more effectively.

## PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND SELF-DIRECTED STUDY

Self-directed study is when you take charge of your own learning.

Psychologists say self-directed learning is linked to something called metacognition—that means being aware of how you learn best. It helps you notice what's working, what's not, and how to change your approach.

It's also connected to motivation. When you feel in control of your learning (instead of just doing it for marks), you're more likely to stay interested and do better. This idea comes from Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory.

Want to dig a bit deeper?

👉 <https://study.com/learn/lesson/self-directed-learning-overview-strategies.html>

## IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DIRECTED STUDY

### What is it?

Self-directed study means taking charge of your own learning—deciding what to study, when to do it, and how to go about it.

### Why does it matter?

University involves a lot of independent work. Being good at self-directed study helps you stay on top of deadlines, understand topics better, and feel more in control of your learning.

### How do you do it?

Start by setting clear goals, planning your time, and checking in with yourself to see what's working. It's also helpful to break tasks into steps and stay flexible when things don't go as planned.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

### 1. Use a Weekly Planner

**Block out classes, study sessions, and time for breaks. Seeing your week laid out helps you stay balanced and avoid last-minute stress.**

# LEARN, SET GOALS & MANAGE TIME

## PRACTICAL TIPS CONTINUED:

### 2. Break Tasks into Chunks

**Big assignments can feel overwhelming. Break them down into smaller steps (like research, outlining, drafting), and tick them off as you go.**

### 3. Set Clear Goals

**Before each study session, set a small, specific goal (e.g., "Summarise two lecture slides" or "Read one article"). It keeps you focused.**

### 4. Try the Pomodoro Technique

**Study for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. After four sessions, take a longer break. Great for keeping energy and focus up.**

### 5. Find Your Best Time to Study

**Some people focus better in the morning, others at night. Pay attention to when you feel most alert and use that time wisely.**